



Sheep and Lamb Inventory

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All sheep and lamb inventory in the United States on January 1, 2005, totaled 6.14 million head, up slightly from 2004, but 3 percent below two years ago. The inventory has leveled off and is showing a slight increase for the first time since 1990. Breeding sheep inventory increased to 4.53 million head on January 1, 2005, up 1 percent from 4.50 million head on January 1, 2004. Ewes one year old and older, at 3.57 million head, were 1 percent below last year.

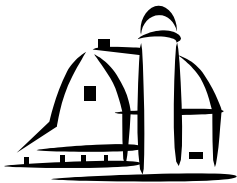
Market sheep and lambs on January 1, 2005, totaled 1.60 million head, down slightly from January 1, 2004. Market lambs comprised 95 percent of the total. Twenty- six percent were lambs under 65 pounds, 13 percent were 65-84 pounds, 24 percent 85-105 pounds, 32 percent were over 105 pounds, and 5 percent were market sheep.

U.S. SHEEP & LAMBS BY CLASS , JANUARY 1, 2002-2005				
ITEM	2002	2003	2004	2005
-----thousand-----				
All Sheep & Lambs	6,685	6,321	6,105	6,135
Breeding	4,913	4,670	4,499	4,533
Ewes	3,980	3,773	3,610	3,573
Rams	200	194	188	190
Replacement Lambs	734	703	702	771
Market Sheep & Lambs	1,772.0	1,651.0	1606.0	1602.0
under 65	470.6	435.9	431.5	413.2
65 to 84	359.4	299.9	255.9	214.7
85 to 105	487.3	415.6	366.8	381.9
over 105	604.2	549.0	486.2	518.1
Market Sheep	76.5	71.6	65.6	74.1
Lamb Crop	4,360.0	4,140.0	4,096.0	-----

Number of Farms and Land in Farms

The number of farms in the United States in 2004 is estimated at 2.11 million, 0.6 percent fewer than in 2003. Total land in farms, at 936.6 million acres, decreased 2.25 million acres, or down 0.2 percent, from 2003. The average U.S. farm size was 443 acres in 2004, an increase of 2 acres from the previous year. The decline in the number of farms and land in farms reflects a continuing consolidation in farming operations and transfers of agricultural land to competing uses.

In Maryland, the number of farms in 2004 is estimated at 12,100, the same as a year earlier. Total land in Maryland farms is 10.000 acres below the previous year with an estimated 2.05 million acres. Subsequently, average farm size dropped one acre to 169 acres. Delaware number of farms and land in farms remains unchanged from 2003 at 2,300 farms and 530,000 acres, respectively.



March Quarterly Agricultural Survey

During late February and early March, Maryland farmers are being contacted by mail, telephone, and personal interview to complete our annual March Agricultural Survey. Around 1,200 farmers across the State are contacted annually at this time of year for information on planting intentions and crops stored on their operations. The results of this survey help provide a snapshot of what producers across, not only Maryland, but also the U.S. are planning to produce during 2005.

Regardless of the size or type of the operation, every report is important to the accuracy and completeness of this preliminary report. All responses are strictly confidential and data are only released as summary statistics at the State and National level. Any questions regarding this effort or the final results should be directed to Norman Bennett, Director of the Maryland Agricultural Statistics Service at norman_bennett@nass.usda.gov or 1-800-675-0295.

U. S. AGRICULTURAL PRICES

Mid-Month January 2005, Entire Month December 2004

Commodity	Unit	United States Prices ^{1/}			Parity
		January 2004	December 2004	January 2005	
---- Dollars ----					
Wheat, Winter	BU	3.66	3.34	3.31	9.90
Corn	BU	2.39	2.04	1.98	6.63
Barley	BU	2.69	2.47	2.37	6.72
Soybeans	BU	7.35	5.45	5.32	16.00
All Hay, Baled	TON	80.10	84.30	84.20	---
Apples, Fresh	LB	0.304	0.223	0.216	0.521
All Beef Cattle	CWT	80.90	86.80	89.10	172.00
Calves	CWT	110.00	122.00	123.00	234.00
Hogs	CWT	36.80	52.30	53.00	106.00
Broilers	LB	0.430	0.390	0.430	---
Turkeys	LB	0.349	0.462	0.393	1.01
Eggs, Market	DOZ	0.806	0.448	0.373	1.68

1/ Agricultural Prices are published at the end of each month throughout the year for the United States and selected states. Maryland is not in the monthly prices program; however, price information is available for Maryland commodities at the end of each production year. Throughout the year on Friday, the Maryland Agricultural Statistics Service in cooperation with the University of Maryland and Maryland Department of Agriculture publishes the Maryland Grain and Livestock report. This reports contains market analysis of local price tends by University economists and current commodity price quotes from local and regional markets throughout Maryland and can be viewed at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/md/rlsetoc.htm#Grain>.

March Release Highlights

Broiler Hatchery	March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Quarterly Hogs & Pigs	March 24
Agricultural Prices	March 30
Grain Stocks	March 31
Prospective Plantings	March 31

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